

Judge Charles P. Daly Recalls the Case.

The mystery of the murder of Mary Rogers was never solved. In these days of stirring events treading upon each other's heels so fast they follow, it is almost impossible to conceive the great popular interest taken in the developments of this case. It was more than a nine days' wonder. The mystery of the murder of the beautiful cigar girl was a theme for conversation and for compassion for years after. Edgar Allan Poe's romance of *Marie Roget* was not needed to make the case famous, although it has to a certain extent rendered the story of the crime a classic. She was a girl of unquestioned respectability. The marvellous beauty with which the romancers of later years invested her, she did not, as I recollect her, possess. She was a pleasant-faced girl, vivacious within the bounds of modesty, and an agreeable person to meet for an interchange of the compliments of the day, during the brief interval of a transaction in cigars or tobacco. I remember her well, as I dropped into Anderson's place on Broadway, near what is now Thomas street, to make a daily purchase. I remember her, as did thousands of others who passed or entered the store, as a clean, wholesome, self-respecting girl, who was earning an honest livelihood. Women in employment in public places were not as plentiful then as now, but such employment was not a rarity. When the girl's body was found in the North River, bearing marks of a brutal death and cruel outrage, there was a storm of indignation aroused, which only grew deeper as investigation proved the good character of the poor girl. This feeling reached a frenzy when the evidence was later found of the desperate struggle she had made in defence of her honor. There were arrests of suspects galore, but there was no shadow of proof, and one by one they were released. In the state of the public mind absolute proof of the innocence of the accused men was necessary to prevent summary action. For years the Sibyl's Cave over on the Elysian Fields, and the spot up on the Palisades where the deed of blood was done, were visited by morbid excursionists. The best detective minds of the age were enlisted in efforts to unravel this terrible mystery, but all clues led into darkness, and the hunters, amateur and professional, were baffled.

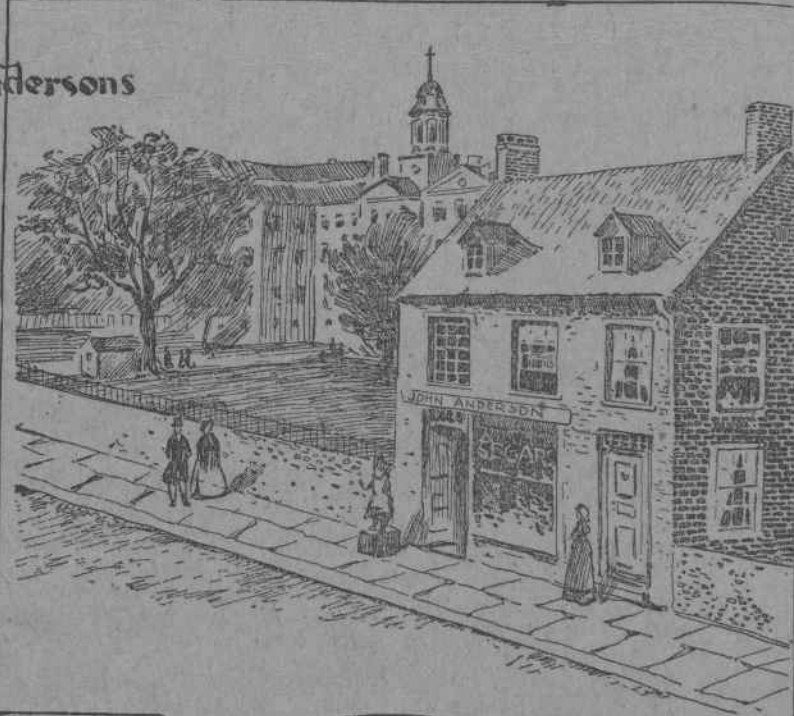
Like thousands of others I held for years to the belief that the veil would be lifted, but long ere this those who did the terrible work, and all those who had a guilty knowledge of it, have gone to their reward, and time has put the seal of silence on the story of the poor cigar girl who died under circumstances that caused a whole nation to cry out for vengeance upon her slayer. From an interview with the president of the American Geographical Association, member of the New York Historical Association, a leading member of the Bar, who was about to enter upon his long judicial career at the time of the tragedy, Judge Charles P. Daly.

The Strange Case of Mary Rogers—Chapter the Last.

She Was "The Pretty Cigar Girl," of Old New York, and the Original of Marie Roget, in Poe's Wonderful Story.

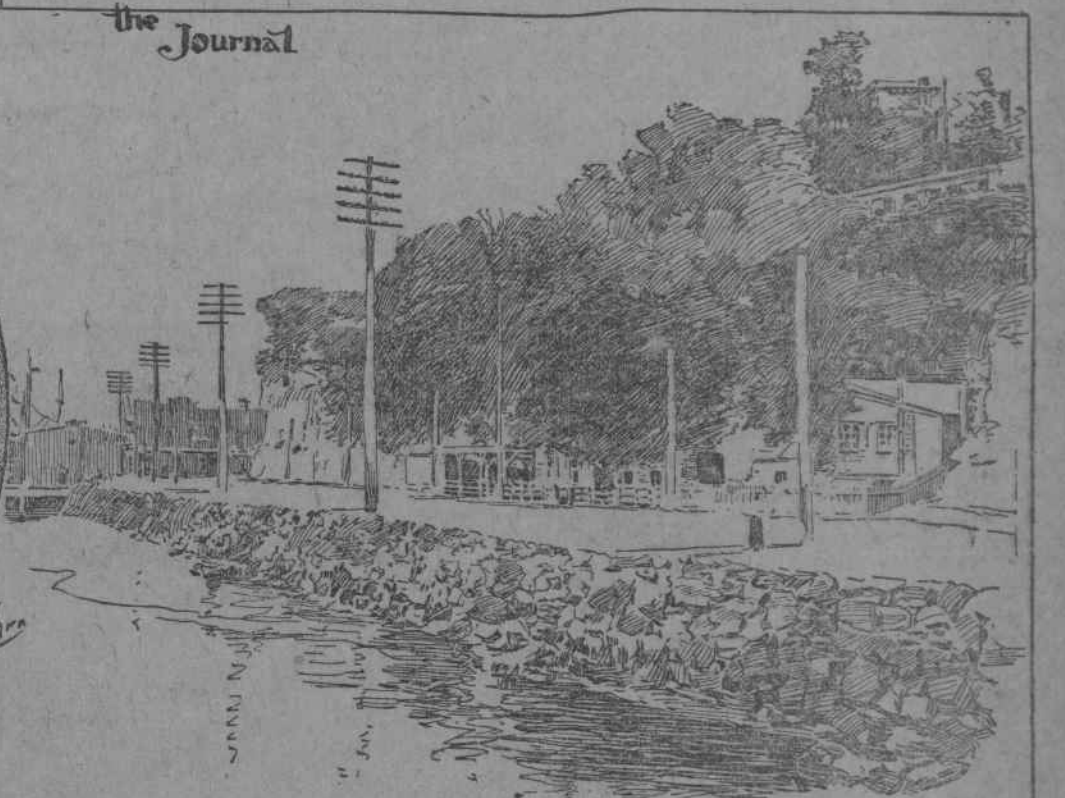
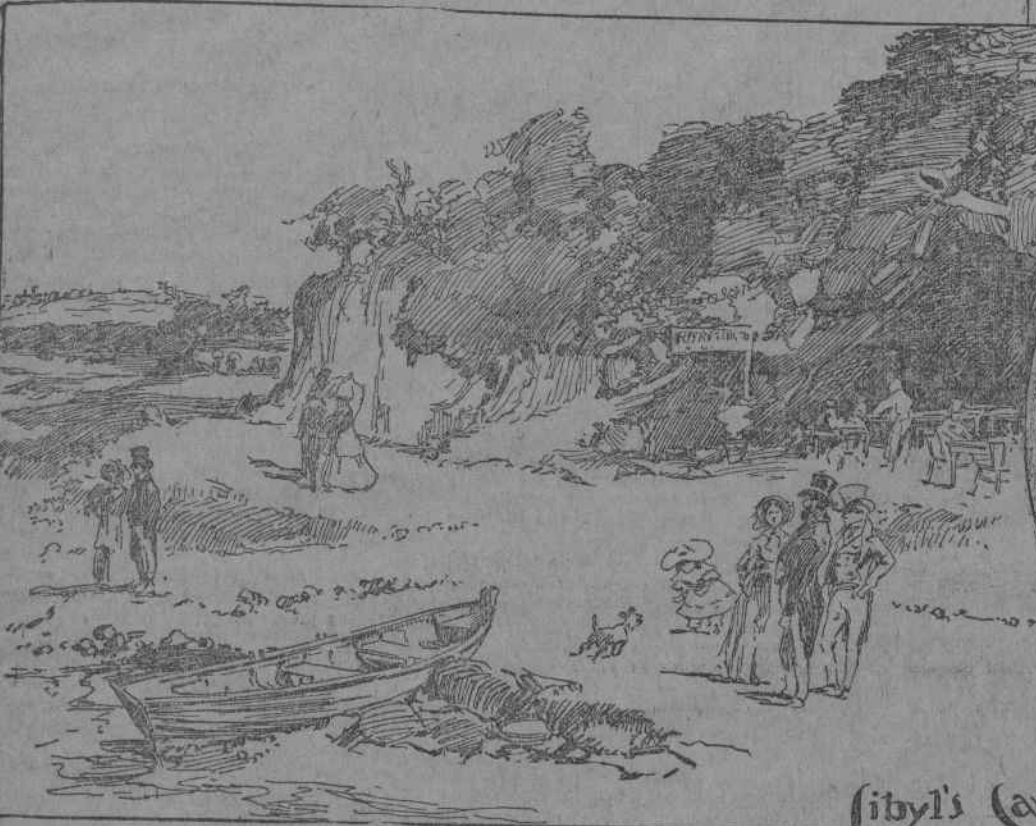
John Andersons

Old tobacco shop in 1841 (from a sketch in 1842)



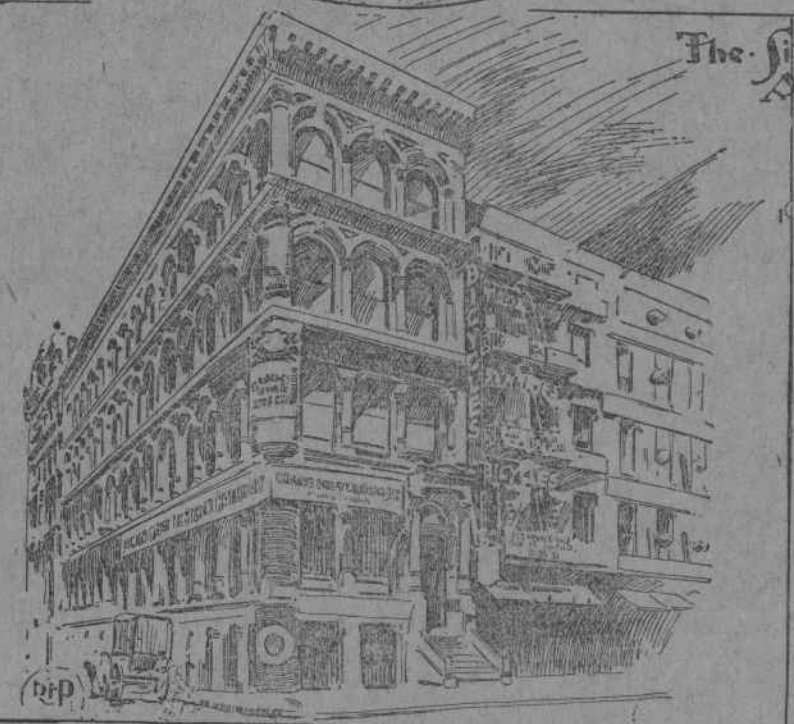
The Historic site of the Cave

as it is today from a photo taken specially for the Journal



Sibyl's Cave

as it was when Mary Rogers was murdered (from a contemporary print)



The site of Anderson's Old tobacco shop.

Thomas St. and Broadway as it is today from a photograph taken expressly for the Journal

A FEW days ago an old white-haired man died at No. 117 West Thirteenth street. He was the last survivor of as famous a murder mystery as ever puzzled the police of New York City.

His name was Frederick A. Ridabock, and fifty-six years ago he was a witness in the case of the murder of Mary Rogers, "the pretty cigar girl," the "Marie Roget" of Edgar Allan Poe's marvellous romance.

And to this day the murder of Mary Rogers is as much of a mystery as ever. All about the location on Broadway where in often times she sold cigars and benched on her customers are the tremendous buildings of one of the largest cities of the world.

Across the North River the dense thickets of bushes where she met her death have been cleared away to meet the demands of a thriving town. The Elysian Fields, once New York's chief pleasure resort, are still there, practically neglected, the haunt of the small boy and the New York tough. Sibyl's cave, off Castle Point, where the body of pretty Mary Rogers was found floating in the river, is now given over to a German beer saloon.

Other generations have come and gone, other lives have been lost along that gaunt rib of rocks, known as the Palisades, but no mystery of the river has ever occasioned the widespread excitement that attended the death of Mary Rogers.

The houses along Broadway fifty-six years ago in that portion of the thoroughfare above Thomas street were small and unpicturesque. Further up they began to thin out, and when Bleecker street was reached they were pretty far uptown. There were many green fields and gardens between Bleecker street and the little cigar store on Broadway, near Thomas street, where Mary Rogers worked.

She was employed by the famous tobacco merchant named John Anderson, who conceived the idea that she would prove a fine attraction for the young bloods of the day in the sale of cigars.

And she did. The slim-waisted, high-heeled gentry of those days flocked to Anderson's store and paid the price of a cigar just for the privilege of a chat with pretty Mary.

The pretty cigar girl became famous. Anderson's shop became a lounging place for the swells of the time. There may be some old resident of New York, tucked away in some of the side streets, who still remembers the brown hair and blue eyes of Mary Rogers. But they must be very few.

The young girl had admirers by the hundred, but so far as the cigar store was concerned she treated them all alike. But down on Nassau street, where her boarding house, it was a different matter.

Although Mary had many admirers, she had given her heart to but one. This was Daniel Payne, a young clerk, who boarded in her mother's house.

Mary's conduct, so far as known, was a model of modest decorum, and her wedding day on which she died.

On only one occasion did anything ever happen that she could not explain to the satisfaction of her friends.

One day she failed to appear at the store. Mr. Anderson, her employer, made no inquiries, supposing that she would return on the following day and explain her absence.

A week passed before she returned. Then she told her employer that she had been visiting friends in the country. There was a rumor, however, that several times during her absence Mary had been seen in company with a tall dark complexioned man.

Another rumor was to the effect that this man was a naval officer, belonging to a foreign war ship in the harbor. The identity of the man, however, has never been ascertained. If Mary had mentioned the name of this man it is possible that her murderer would have been found.

She seemed more sober and thoughtful after her return to the store, and her admirers could not understand her altered demeanor. A week after her return she said one afternoon to her employer:

"Mr. Anderson, I have decided to give up my position."

"Why, what is the matter, Mary?" he asked. "Are you not satisfied?"

"Oh, yes, entirely," she replied, "but the fact is I—that is (with a little blush), I am engaged to be married."

And so Mary Rogers went home to her mother's boarding house to assist in the general household duties. A few days afterward her engagement to Daniel Payne, the clerk, was announced.

Two weeks after beginning her home life, on the morning of Sunday, July 25, 1841, Mary, after finishing her household duties, told her mother that she was going to spend the day with a Mrs. Downing, in Bleecker street.

"Very well," her mother replied, "but be home by bedtime."

"I will, mother," said Mary.

Then she went tripping along the hall to the door of Payne's room. She knocked and received a response.

"Daniel," she said, "I am going up to Aunt Downing's. You may call and bring me home this evening. If you will."

"All right," said Payne. "I'll be up about 7 o'clock."

Then Mary Rogers, leaving Broadway, walked across the open, pleasant lots and green fields toward Bleecker street.

What happened to the girl on that day only God and the man who murdered her may ever know.

During the afternoon there was a tremendous thunderstorm. The rain fell in torrents. The fields and byways were flooded.

"I suppose Mary will stay at her aunt's to-night," said Mrs. Rogers to young Payne at the supper table. "The weather is so bad, I think it would be useless for you to go up there for her."

"Then I shall not call for her," replied Payne.

Mary did not come home that night nor the next morning. Payne went to his

work, as usual. When afternoon came Mrs. Rogers became worried. Payne returned from work in the evening and was apprised of Mary's absence.

He went at once to Mrs. Downing's house. To his surprise he was informed that Mary had not been there at all.

The police were notified. A general search was made. A small boy said that he had seen Mary walking with a "tall,

dark man" on Sunday morning near Bleecker street. Again the "tall, dark man," Mephisto or Satan.

The disappearance of Mary Rogers became the sensation of the hour. Sneers were uttered; unkind words were spoken. "I told you so," said the many; "she is a good girl, and something has happened to her," said the few.

So it went until Wednesday.

On that day some fishermen, trawling their nets off Castle Point, Hoboken, made a ghastly catch. It was the body of Mary Rogers.

It was found not far from a refreshment saloon known as "Sibyl's Cave." The body was very much disfigured. The face was bruised as with a heavy instrument. A stout cord was fastened around the waist, to which a heavy stone had

been attached.

There was a piece of lace tied tightly around her throat. It had been torn from her neck and so tightly had it been fastened that it was buried in the flesh. There were marks of cords in her wrists. There were light-colored kid gloves on the hands. Her pretty bonnet still hung by its pink ribbons around her neck. Her clothing had been dreadfully torn.

There was a vast amount of amazement, sorrow and speculation. The police were helpless. They could not find a clue. A few days afterward an anonymous letter was received by the authorities, in which it was stated that the writer had seen on Sunday afternoon, from the New Jersey side of the Hudson, a boat pulling out from the New York shore containing six men and a well-dressed girl.

On their approach he recognized the girl as Mary Rogers. The men were rough looking. The girl was apparently not under duress, as she laughed and talked with her companions. They strolled slowly into the woods.

Hardly had they disappeared when the writer noticed another boat approaching. It contained three well-dressed men. One of them went ashore, where he met two other gentlemen on the beach, and excitedly asked them if they had seen a young woman land from a boat a few minutes before. He was told of the landing of the boat and the disappearance of the girl in the woods. He asked if she went with them willingly, and was told that she had.

The stranger appeared satisfied and, stepping into the boat with his companions, returned to New York.

Although the writer of this letter was not known, its contents were corroborated. It was published in the newspapers, and on the following day the two gentlemen who had been walking on the beach came forward and testified as to the truth. They were not sure, however, that the girl who landed from the boat was Mary Rogers.

A few weeks afterward a stage driver named Adams came forward and testified that he had seen Mary on that fatal Sunday walk out of the Bulls Ferry in Hoboken, accompanied by a "tall, dark man." She went with him to "Nick Muller's" roadhouse.

Mrs. Loss, who kept the house, said that a couple of that description had come to her house on Sunday, and after partaking of some refreshments had gone again

into the woods. Soon afterward she heard a woman scream, but as such sounds were of frequent occurrence she paid no attention to it.

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There was a white petticoat, a parasol, a silk scarf and a linen handkerchief marked "M. R." Lending away from this point there was a broken track leading in the direction of the river, as though a heavy body had been dragged through the bushes. This is all that was ever learned of the murder.

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Once sworn to secrecy, Mary was true. When she left her mother's house on the Sunday she was killed she met the "tall, dark man" and went with him to Hoboken, expecting to be back in ample time to meet the good young man, Daniel Payne, at her aunt's house.

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Lashed and Pilloried for Stealing an Umbrella.

One hour in the pillory, ten lashes on his bare back at the whipping post and three months in the county jail. That was the severe penalty imposed upon James Harris in the Court of General Sessions of New-castle County, Delaware, the other day at Wilmington after he had entered a plea of "guilty" to a charge of stealing an umbrella last February.

Jennie Harris, his wife, who was his accomplice in the theft, also answered "guilty," but her sentence was light. Women are exempt from punishment at the pillory and whipping post, but they are not exempt from imprisonment. Mrs. Harris's part in the great crime brought a sentence of one day upon her. She was taken over to Newcastle on Thursday afternoon and liberated on Friday. Saturday morning she went into the jail yard and looked at her husband as he stood in the pillory. A few hours later she saw the heavy auto-nine-dalls fall with a "crack" ten times upon his bare shoulders and back. When the last lash had been piled she burst into tears. Then she went to him and kissed him an affectionate

"farewell." Harris after his whipping was placed in a cell with another prisoner and there he will stay until the first cool breezes of September.

The crime for which Harris must pay this severe penalty was committed in February. Harris is an umbrella mender by trade. He was walking down Seventh street one night in the early part of February, just at a time when the members of the Eighth Ward Republican League were preparing a reception in the club rooms. His wife was with him. He walked into the hallway to see what was going on. No one was in the hallway, but three umbrellas were there. He could not—so he admitted in court—resist the temptation to take one of them.

"Things had been dull with me that day," he said, "and I thought I could take the umbrella and make a few cents on it. So I just picked the umbrella up and handed it to my wife, who stood outside."

But just as he handed the umbrella to his wife Charles Higgins appeared and caught him.

The umbrella chanced to belong to Higgins, and he promptly sent for an officer, who took both Harris and his wife to the station. When arraigned before Judge Ball, in the Municipal Court, Harris pleaded for mercy on the ground that he was a poor man and needed money to support his family. The Judge, however, showed no mercy. He held him in \$500 bail for the Upper Court. Harris was unable to produce bail, and both he and his wife went to the County Jail. There they languished until their case was taken up week before last.

In addition to the punishment at the post and pillory Harris will practically serve a sentence of six months while his wife has already served three months for complicity. And all for the simple theft of an umbrella. To New Yorkers the case of Harris may seem extraordinary, but it is not so to Delawareans. The people of Delaware hold to the whipping post because they believe the fear of it keeps many criminals out of the State. Men have been whipped at the post in Newcastle with forty lashes for the theft of a hog.

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